

DATE: January 22, 2001

TO: Applicants

FROM: Office of Procurement and Grants Management ("OPGM")

SUBJECT: Program Announcement for BusinessLINC 01-1, for Business-to business learning, investment, networking and collaboration ("BusinessLINC").

Pursuant to § 102 of Public Law No. 106-554, BusinessLINC Grants and Cooperative Agreements, the U.S. Small Business Administration ("SBA") plans to enter into cooperative agreements with qualified coalitions of entities to promote the growth of small businesses by matching large concerns with small concerns and creating business-to-business partnering and mentoring relationships. These BusinessLINC cooperative agreements would provide funding to the qualified coalitions to: (1) expand business-to-business relationships between large and small businesses, and (2) provide businesses with online information and a database of companies that are interested in mentor-protégé programs or community-based, statewide, or local business development programs. The qualified coalition may be comprised of public or private entities, or any combination of public and private entities. To be eligible, the coalition must provide an amount, either in-kind or in cash, equal to the grant amount.

All qualified coalitions are invited to submit an application, an original and two (2) copies, in response to Program Announcement No. BusinessLINC 01-1. Applicants are required to bind the cost proposal and technical proposal separately. Prepare the technical and cost proposals in single-spaced 12-pt. Times New Roman format. The technical proposal must not exceed 30 pages, excluding exhibits and appendices. SBA will not return proposals, but will retain them for a limited period of time.

The closing date for the program announcement is March 20, 2001, 4:00 P.M., Eastern Standard Time. Address applications to the U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Procurement & Grants Management ("OPGM"), 409 3rd Street, SW, 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20416, Attention: Mina Bookhard, Agreement Officer.

If hand carried, deliver the application to Mina Bookhard, or her designee, at the above address. Deliveries to other locations will be considered late if not received in OPGM at the U.S. Small Business Administration by 4:00 p.m. on March 20, 2001.

Please place the following notation in the lower left corner of the sealed envelope or package:

THIS IS A SEALED OFFER. DO NOT OPEN. STAMP THE DATE AND  
TIME RECEIVED ON THE ENVELOPE. THE ENCLOSED  
APPLICATION IS IN RESPONSE TO PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

NUMBER BusinessLINC 01-1, DUE March 20, 2001 AT 4:00 P.M., Eastern Standard Time, AT SBA's OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT & GRANTS MANAGEMENT, Suite 5000.

Sincerely,

Sharon Gurley  
Director  
Office of Procurement  
and Grants Management

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT  
BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS LEARNING, INVESTMENT, NETWORKING, AND  
COLLABORATION (“BusinessLINC”)

FISCAL YEAR 2001

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

OPENING DATE: January 19, 2001

CLOSING DATE: March 20, 2001

Announcement No: BusinessLINC 01-1

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## **I. LEGISLATIVE PURPOSE**

On December 21, 2000, the President signed into law § 102 of Public Law 106-554, BusinessLINC Grants and Cooperative Agreements (“BusinessLINC”), codified at 15 U.S.C. § 637(n). BusinessLINC authorizes the Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (“SBA”) to enter into cooperative agreements with any coalition of private entities, public entities, or any combination of public and private entities, to: (1) expand business-to-business relationships between large and small businesses; and (2) provide businesses with online information and a database of companies that are interested in mentor-protégé programs or community-based, statewide, or local business development programs. To be eligible for award, a coalition must provide an amount, either in kind or in cash, equal to the grant amount.

The purpose of this announcement is to solicit applications from qualified coalitions wishing to enter into cooperative agreements with SBA and obtain grant funding for the purposes set forth above. This grant money will enable the coalitions to assist large and small businesses to build partnering and mentoring relationships to help small businesses become competitive. Subject to the availability of funds, cooperative agreements awarded under this announcement will be for a minimum of \$25,000 and no one grant may exceed \$250,000.

## **II. INTRODUCTION**

Congress recognized that many small businesses lack sufficient training and education to survive and expand. It enacted BusinessLINC to augment assistance under the Small Business Act and other legislation by providing grants to qualified coalitions to foster relationships between large and small businesses. The program requires that grantees match SBA’s funds, either in-kind or cash.

## **III. PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

1. Program Name: Business-to business learning, investment, networking and collaboration (“BusinessLINC”).
2. Purpose: Provide assistance to public or private entities, or any combination of public and private entities, to foster business-to-business relationships between large and small businesses, especially those small businesses located in low income areas and Native American communities.
3. Federal Catalog Number:
4. Authority: BusinessLINC Grants and Cooperative Agreements, P.L. 106-105, § 102, codified at 15 U.S.C. §637(n).
5. Funding Instrument: Cooperative Agreement.
6. Funding: Funding of up to \$7.0 million for Federal Fiscal Year 2001, with \$1.25 million anticipated for Native American communities. Funds awarded under the BusinessLINC Program will require a 1:1 non-Federal match for each dollar awarded.
7. Funding Range: \$25,000-250,000
8. Number of Awards: SBA anticipates issuing multiple awards under this announcement. The number may vary, based on the needs of the pool of qualified applicants received and the

amount of available funds. SBA estimates that it will issue up to 50 awards under this announcement.

9. Targeted assistance: A minimum of \$1.25 million is anticipated for Native American communities.
10. Closing Time and Date for the Submission of Applications: March 20, 2001 at 4:00 P.M. Eastern Standard Time.
11. Project Starting Date: Within approximately 120 days after closing date.
12. Project Intent: Each application must identify the geographical area to be served by the coalition, the forms of the assistance to be provided, and, if applicable, the type of small business targeted for assistance.
13. Project Duration: The period of performance for this cooperative agreement is one base year with the option of up to four additional 12-month periods, to be exercised at the discretion of SBA, and subject to availability of funds, satisfactory performance, and continued program authorization. Each option year, if exercised, will constitute a separate budget period. The project recipient's satisfactory performance will be one of the key factors in determining the award of an option year. Failure to secure the required annual non-Federal contribution during any project year may jeopardize continued option year funding.
14. Proposal Evaluation: Applications will first be screened to determine if the applicant meets certain mandatory eligibility requirements. SBA will not evaluate applications for BusinessLINC that fail to document that the applicant meets the mandatory eligibility requirements set forth in Section IV below. In addition, applications that are incomplete, illegible, or unreadable, in whole or in part, will be deemed incomplete and will not be evaluated. An Objective Review Committee ("ORC") will score eligible proposals based on evaluation criteria stated in this announcement. The ORC will consist of SBA officials and may include Federal Officials from other agencies. SBA may ask applicants for clarification on the technical and cost aspects of the proposals. Such requests for clarifications do not constitute a commitment to fund the proposed effort.
15. Points of Contact: Questions concerning the technical aspects of this Program Announcement should be directed to Rick Mayronne, Office of Government Contracting and Business Development at (202) 205-7736. However, due to the competitive process, SBA will be unable to assist with answers to specific questions regarding individual proposals. Questions concerning budgeting or funding for this grant should be directed to Mina Bookhard at (202) 205-7080.
16. Award Notification: All applicants will receive a written notification relative to selection of award recipients. SBA will not provide debriefing sessions for unsuccessful proposals.
17. Cancellation: SBA reserves the right to cancel this announcement in whole or in part at the Agency's discretion.

#### **IV. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS FOR THIS GRANT**

A coalition will be considered eligible for funding for BusinessLINC if it is:

1. A coalition of private entities;
2. A coalition of public entities;
3. A coalition of any combination of public and private entities; or
4. A coalition of Indian tribes or Indian tribes and other public or private entities.

There must be a written agreement between participants in the coalition that they intend to assist small businesses through this program.

The coalition must designate a lead entity to receive and be responsible for the grant funds if the coalition itself is not a separate legally incorporated entity or is otherwise legally recognized or chartered by March 20, 2001. A lead entity must be legally incorporated or otherwise legally recognized or chartered by March 20, 2001.

SBA will not evaluate applications that do not meet these requirements. SBA may not screen applicants for eligibility until after the Closing Date for application acceptance. SBA will attempt to notify applicants of ineligible proposals as soon as practicable. However, SBA is under no obligation to notify ineligible applicants before the Closing Date for the acceptance of applications under this announcement. SBA strongly urges applicants to ensure that all eligibility requirements are met and documented before sending an application to SBA.

## **V. INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS FOR THIS GRANT**

The following applicants will automatically be considered ineligible and their applications will not be evaluated:

1. the applicant coalition or any member of the coalition has an unresolved audit by any Federal agency;
2. the applicant coalition or any member of the coalition is suspended, debarred, or otherwise excluded from any Federal agency non-procurement or procurement programs; or
3. the applicant coalition or any member of the coalition has defaulted on an obligation to the United States.

## **VI. GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **1. Definitions**

Throughout this announcement specific terminology may be used. The definitions are contained in a glossary of terms located at the end of this document in Section XV.

### **2. Program Income**

All program income as defined in OMB Circular A-110, and OMB A-122 must be reported on financial reports submitted to SBA and added to funds committed to the project by SBA and recipient coalitions. Program income may only be used to further eligible program objectives or must be returned to the Federal Government.

### **3. Cost Principles**

- a. General: All costs approved for a successful applicant must meet the tests of necessity, reasonableness, allowability and allocability in accordance with the cost principles applicable to this award. All proposed costs are subject to pre-award audit. Grantees are responsible to ensure proper management and financial accountability of Federal funds to

preclude future cost disallowances. SBA will issue funding by reimbursing awardees for costs incurred, as described in the cooperative agreement and applicable OMB Circulars. SBA may also advance up to 25 percent of each year's Federal share awarded to a recipient entity after notice of the award has been issued and before the non-Federal matching funds are obtained.

- b. Carryover Policy: The grantee may request approval to use unexpended funds in the next budget period. This is permissible if funds are to be used for a non-severable, non-recurring project or activity within the scope of the BusinessLINC program. Non-severable means a project in its entirety that cannot be subdivided. The request for using unexpended funds in the next budget period must include the following:
- (1) SF 424, budget pages, and justification;
  - (2) Explanation of why the funds were not expended during the period in which they were awarded; and
  - (3) Evidence of match. The match requirement for funds carried over to the next budget period can be met by using any excess of matching funds from the current budget period, new matching funds, or a combination of both.

The request must be made no later than 60 days before the end of the budget/project period or the de-obligation process will begin. Approved requests will require the issuance of a revised Notice of Award. Expenditures for funds carried over to the next budget period must be tracked separately.

#### 4. Publications/Websites

All publications or websites developed under this cooperative agreement must be submitted to SBA for prior review and approval. SBA will have an unlimited license to use data and written materials generated under this grant award, whether or not the materials are copyrighted. Any publications resulting from this project must include the following acknowledgement of support, whether copyrighted or not, in legible, easily readable print:

This cooperative agreement is partially funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration. SBA's funding is not an endorsement of any products, opinions, or services. All SBA funded programs are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis.

The grant recipient may not use SBA's name or logo for the endorsement of any services, products, or merchandise under this award.

The SBA logo may appear on prominent webpages of Internet sites that are related to this project, but must appear with the above disclaimer in legible, easily readable print and acknowledgement of support in close physical proximity (within 2 inches) next to it.

The use by SBA or the coalition of programs or "plug-ins" should be limited to those that are provided to the user free of charge. SBA's Web Guidelines and Standards, located at <http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/indexstandards.html>, are incorporated herein by reference. These Standards must be followed to the extent practicable. A "link" to the Standards must be placed within the home page of the website. The awardee agrees that there will be no advertisements or



commercial promotions of any kind displayed on the first page of the website to which the SBA links.

5. Reports

- a. General Reporting: The selected grantees will be required to submit the reports as outlined below. Participants must agree to cooperate with SBA in the collection and retention of data required by this agency. The coalition's ability to meet reporting requirements must be addressed in the Technical Proposal. Payments may be withheld if reports are not submitted within the required time frame or if the quality of reports is considered inadequate.
- b. Performance Reports: Quarterly performance reports, unless otherwise specified, must contain a summary of activity for the reporting period using the following format:
  1. A comparison of actual accomplishments to the estimated milestones established in the proposal and/or subsequent cooperative agreement, including a list of each large business recruited for the program, and each large business-small business linkage produced and the status of such linkage.
  2. A discussion of accomplished milestones and reasons for slippage in those cases where milestones are not met. Where milestones were not met, a plan of action must be provided to overcome these slippages or a detailed statement of how the program will better serve targeted small businesses if the milestones are revised.
  3. Information relating to actual financial expenditures of budgeted cost categories versus the estimated budget award, including an explanation of all cost overruns, if any, by budgeted cost category. Financial data furnished in this report is from a manager's standpoint and is in addition to that furnished in the financial reports cited below.
  4. Small Business Client Progress Reports. SBA is interested in the actual outcome of assistance provided to small business clients. As such, all participants will be required to compile, maintain, and submit data as part of its quarterly performance reports. This report must include information regarding each small business as follows:
    - A. At Intake:
      - Geographic location (Address, Urban, Suburban, Rural)
      - Goals for assistance through large business relationship (assistance with business start, marketing assistance, technical assistance, management assistance, training, development of customer-base, joint venturing, subcontracting, financial assistance, other)
      - Expected outcomes as a result of assistance (improved customer-base, increase in number of contracts, increased revenues, jobs created, enhanced productivity, increased profitability, improved management/technical systems, other)
      - Business status (is it a start-up or existing business)Intake reports should be compiled and maintained by the coalition within seven business days of initial intake under this cooperative agreement.

B. At Follow-up:

- Geographic location
- Achievement or progress toward meeting goals, including a detailed report of the assistance provided to the firm and the outcome of such assistance (improved customer-base, increase in number of contracts, increased revenues, jobs created, enhanced productivity, increased profitability, improved management/technical systems, other)
- Business status

Follow up data should be collected on all small business clients. Follow-up reports should be submitted with quarterly performance reports.

5. Information relating to specific activities by coalitions to attract, recruit, and retain large business participants, to match specific large and small businesses, and to promote and enhance the linkages once made.
6. Any other pertinent information, including any significant accomplishments or completed milestones of special significance. The report should include items which may be determined appropriate by SBA after acceptance of the grant proposal but which cannot be pre-determined because of the special purpose of the grant at the writing of this document.

Quarterly reports will be due no later than:

- a) April 15 for the period ending March 31,
- b) July 15 for the period ending June 30,
- c) October 15 for the period ending September 30, and
- d) January 15 for the period ending December 31.

c. Financial Reports

1. Financial Status Report Forms must be submitted every quarter with the performance reports. Reports must include Standard Form ("SF") 269, the Financial Status Report, and SF 272, the Federal Cash Transactions Report.
2. The year-end report must include a cost breakdown of actual expenditures and costs incurred by line item. Participants will also be required to submit the SF 2069, Detailed Actual Expenditures for Period Covered by Request, with the final SF 269.

**SBA may withhold payment of advances or reimbursements if reports are not received or are regarded as inadequate.** SBA will notify participants if it decides to take such action.

6. Match Requirements

Funds awarded under the BusinessLINC Program will require a 1:1 non-Federal match for each dollar awarded. Matching funds may come from all sources (including in-kind resources), except Federal funds.

7. Fundraising Not Allowable Expense

Expenditures for fundraising activities are not allowable costs under this cooperative agreement. Applicants must be able to raise matching funds without the assistance of grant

funds. The applicant must demonstrate that it has adequate fundraising resources to obtain required non-Federal matching funds to perform the project.

8. Subgrants

An organization selected to receive a cooperative agreement under the BusinessLINC Program may provide sub-grants. Applicants wishing to provide sub-grants as a part of their implementation plan should include detailed information about these subgrants in their Technical Proposal.

An applicant that intends to make subgrants using BusinessLINC grant funds must receive written approval from SBA prior to making subgrants. The applicant must identify the subgrantee(s) and describe in detail what the subgrantee(s) will do to help the grantee implement its proposal. An applicant must submit information to SBA demonstrating that, through the subgrantee(s), the grantee's program will:

- (1) provide expanded services to the community,
- (2) provide a method by which one or more previously underserved communities will gain access to the program, or
- (3) provide other specific benefits to the clients, such as specialized training, expanded schedules of operation, or other benefits.

If an applicant has identified potential subgrantee(s) at the time it submits an application for a BusinessLINC grant, the applicant must include the information requested above in the application. Otherwise, the applicant or grantee may submit the requested information at such time that approvals for subgrantee(s) are requested.

The total amount of monies subgranted by the grantee must not exceed 50% of the total amount of the BusinessLINC grant.

9. Contracts

Any and all contracts awarded under this cooperative agreement must be approved by SBA in advance and in writing and must not exceed 50% of the total amount of the BusinessLINC grant.

10. Diversity

In making grants under the Act, SBA will ensure that grant recipients serve diverse populations including urban, rural and Indian tribal communities serving diverse populations.

11. Diversity of Geographic Areas

SBA will not fund more than one coalition serving the same geographic area that provides the same services to the same target small businesses in a fiscal year.

## **VII. OMB UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS AND COST PRINCIPLES**

The BusinessLINC Grant Notice of Award incorporates by reference all applicable OMB Circulars and Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), including:

1. OMB Circular A-21, “Cost Principles for Educational Institutions,” containing cost principles for educational institutions;
2. OMB Circular A-87 “Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments,” containing cost principles for State, local governments, and federally recognized Indian tribal governments.
3. OMB Circular A-110, “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations,” containing administrative requirements;
4. OMB Circular A-122, “Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations,” containing cost principles for non-profits;
5. OMB Circular A-133, “Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations,” concerning audits;
6. Current versions of OMB Circulars are available from the Office of Management and Budget’s website. The address is [www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/OMB/html/circular.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/OMB/html/circular.html); and
7. FAR Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures.

## **VIII. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The following details what each eligible applicant for funding must submit for review by SBA. The maximum number of points an applicant may receive for each criterion group is shown to the right of the listing. An Objective Review Committee (“ORC”) will score eligible proposals based on evaluation criteria stated in this announcement. The ORC will consist of SBA officials and may include Federal Officials from other agencies. SBA may ask applicants for clarification on the technical and cost aspects of the proposals. Such clarifications do not constitute a commitment to fund the proposed effort.

### **A. Eligibility**

#### Section 1. Eligibility Requirements

In this section the applicant must prove that it meets the eligibility requirements set forth in Section IV above. Applicants are reminded to include documentation of the mandatory eligibility requirements in their technical narrative. Failure to provide the mandatory eligibility documentation will result in disqualification of the application, and the application will not be evaluated. In addition, incomplete or illegible (in whole or in part) applications will not be evaluated.

### **B. Technical Proposal (170 points)**

#### Section 1. Applicant Experience and Qualifications (10 points)

Applicant experience includes information regarding current and past performance in providing assistance to small businesses. Such experience may reside in either the coalition

as a whole or in individual members. To the extent possible, the applicant should provide internal statistical data to document its past experience and illustrate current activities. In this section, the applicant should discuss the following:

1. Its (or its members') understanding of the small business community and the needs of small businesses, especially those in distressed or low-income areas and Native American communities.
2. Its (or its members') understanding of existing and historical small business assistance programs.
3. As part of documenting past experience, the applicant should include any grants or contracts similar in scope to the grant for which the coalition is applying that the coalition or any of its members has received. Specifically provide the name, if any, of any Federal or non-Federal, agency or private sector foundations or organizations providing funding, the grant or contract number, a short summary of services provided under each grant, and the periods of performance. Include in each summary the name and contact information (phone number and E-mail address) of the person providing oversight on each grant or contract.
4. The coalition's ability to penetrate the target market, including any experience enlisting the cooperation of large businesses to assist developing concerns.

#### Section 2. Institutional Capacity (60 points)

This section should include the following:

1. Personnel Qualifications and Internal Structure (35 points)
  - Discuss the coalition's ability to obtain personnel who are qualified to meet the goals of providing assistance under this announcement. Provide position descriptions and resumes of personnel key to the coalition's participation in the BusinessLINC Program. The resumes should clearly present each employee's qualifications relative to this particular work. Special mention should be made of relevant experience. Personnel indicated should demonstrate knowledge of business development, business structures, business planning, marketing, business management, financial management, web design and database management.
  - Provide an organizational chart showing all proposed full-time and part-time project staff and the amount of time each will devote to the project. The BusinessLINC Project Director must be a full time employee of the coalition or a full-time employee of a coalition member; however, the BusinessLINC Project Director does not have to be solely dedicated to this activity.
  - Describe the role of contractors, subgrantees and/or outside consultants and indicate the percent of the project services the coalition anticipates each will provide.
  - Provide a description of at least one staff or consultant function to handle on-going program data collection and electronic reporting to SBA.
  - Indicate the position(s) within the coalition that will be responsible for financial record keeping regarding receipt and expenditure of program funds.

2. Data Collection and Maintenance Capacity (25 points)

- Describe the coalition's current client data collection and management system and how it will be used or modified to meet reporting and other requirements of this grant. If the coalition does not currently have a client data collection and management system, then explain how it intends to meet reporting and other requirements of this grant, i.e., use a member's system or create a new system, and describe this system.
- Discuss the coalition's computer capacities, if any, and the software used. Indicate whether or not the coalition is connected to the Internet and, if not, delineate plans to become connected. The applicant should indicate its level of willingness/capability to report data via the Internet as well as how the applicant will accomplish its electronic management, communication, reporting and database goals.
- Describe the coalition's internal systems of checks and balances in terms of financial, data collection, and reporting systems. Also indicate who will be responsible for coordination and submission of data and reports, and how the coalition will ensure that this responsibility will be fully discharged/undertaken.

Section 3. Program Narrative (60 points)

1. Proposed assistance management plan (30 points)

(a) The management plan to expand business-to-business relationships between large and small businesses should include, but not be limited to:

- specific numerical goals for recruiting large and small businesses and establishing linkages;
- specific strategies to recruit and retain large businesses to participate in the program;
- specific strategies to identify small businesses capable of benefiting from assistance under this program, particularly those located in low-income areas and Native American communities;
- specific strategies to match specific large businesses with small businesses that can best benefit from the particular expertise of the large business and from the forms of assistance the large business is able and willing to provide;
- specific strategies to support and strengthen the large-small business relationships (SBA is particularly interested in proposed actions by the coalition to assist the large business to provide the kind and amount of assistance that will maximize benefits to and meet the particular needs of small business clients);
- specific strategies to provide the following types of assistance to targeted small businesses: business planning assistance, marketing assistance, management assistance, financial management skills development, technical assistance, etc.

(b) The plan to provide businesses with online information and a database of companies that are interested in mentor-protégé programs or community-based, statewide, or local business development programs must include:

- a description of the role this database will play in the coalition's broader plan to match mentors and proteges;

- a description of how the online information and database will be displayed and made available on the world wide web (include an outline or picture of how the webpage will be displayed);
- a description of the information to be provided online and how this information will assist small businesses and the relationship between the large and small business;
- a description of the database of large and small businesses interested in mentor-protégé or community based, statewide or local business development programs (including a list of concerns seeking to be mentors, a list of concerns seeking to be protégés, etc.);
- a description of how the online information and database will link to Pro-NET and SBA's website and other websites useful to small businesses; and
- a description of how the coalition's webpage will: (1) follow SBA's Web Guidelines and Standards located at <http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/indexstandards.html>, and (2) follow the guidelines set forth in Section VI.4 of this announcement.

## 2. Outreach and delivery plan (30 points)

The plan should include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- a brief description and map of the proposed service area;
- the intended focus of the program, including a description of any specialized assistance the coalition intends to provide;
- the types of small businesses that the coalition intends to help (e.g., small businesses in certain industries, certain sizes of small businesses, only start-up small businesses, only small businesses that have operated for at least three years, all of these or some of these types);
- a demonstration of the need for this program in the proposed geographic area;
- a description of the target market to be served – geographic size, population numbers, population type (e.g., empowerment zone, urban, rural, suburban, Indian reservation);
- the method(s) by which the applicant organization will incorporate outside resources into the plan (involvement of universities or particular individuals with specific areas of expertise).

Extra points will be awarded to proposals targeting low-income areas and Native American communities.

## Section 4. Performance Measurements (20 points)

The applicant should discuss the measures that it will use to evaluate the success of its proposed plan, and how it intends to meet its stated objectives. Measures should include number of large and small businesses participating, number of linkages produced, and assistance provided. Measures should also cover benefits derived by small businesses as a result of such assistance, such as new contracts awarded, new customers, new management/technical systems implemented, increased revenues, creation of new jobs, enhanced productivity, increased profitability, and improved financial performance.

## Section 5. Timeline/Milestones (5 points)

In this section the applicant must include a timeline with milestones covering the 12-month grant period. Milestones should clearly illustrate the applicant's goals for: (a) creating,

expanding, and supporting relationships between large and small businesses, and (b) creating and maintaining online information and a database of companies interested in mentor-protégé programs or community based, statewide, or local business development programs.

#### Section 6. Plans for Raising Matching Funds (10 points)

The applicant must demonstrate that it is capable of meeting the match requirements. Therefore, the applicant must provide a detailed development plan showing how the cash and in-kind match will be raised over the length of the project. For the cash match, the applicant must include letters of commitment from non-Federal sources to certify the ability to match Federal contributions.

#### Section 7. Supporting Documentation (5 points)

In this section the applicant should provide any necessary documentation to support its proposal, including but not limited to the following documents:

1. An organizational chart of the entire coalition, including the names of all of the members.
2. Identification of the chief executive of the coalition or other such person responsible for managing the BusinessLINC Program (identified as the BusinessLINC Project Director).
3. Résumés and reference information for personnel key to managing the BusinessLINC grant, if awarded.
4. Designation of a lead entity of such coalition to receive and be responsible for the grant funds and evidence that the lead entity is legally incorporated, chartered or recognized, or evidence that the coalition is legally incorporated, chartered or recognized.
5. A statement authorizing SBA to make inquiries to other Federal Agencies as to the performance capabilities of the coalition or member entities.
6. Any explanation of how the members of the coalition will interact and collaborate or how the contractors or sub-grantees will fit into the work flow plan.
7. For Indian Tribes, evidence that a State or Federal Government has recognized the tribe.
8. Evidence that the coalition and its members are located in a State or territory of the United States or the District of Columbia.
9. Evidence that the coalition or lead entity and at least one other member of the coalition have experience assisting small businesses.
10. A written agreement between participants in the coalition that they will assist small businesses through this program.

#### **C. Cost Proposal (50 points)**

The cost proposal must include the application cover sheet, budget information, assurances and certifications. The applicant's Cost Proposal will be evaluated in terms of the quality and effectiveness of proposed strategies and whether the budget is reasonable and appropriately related to the objectives of the proposal.

### **IX. PREPARING THE BUDGET**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STANDARD FORM 424 (APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE)



Standard Form 424, Application of Federal Assistance, will be found beginning at page A-1 of this announcement. This guidance supplements that contained on the reverse side of the form.

- Item 1. Self-explanatory
- Item 2. Refer to instructions on reverse of form
- Item 3. Refer to instructions on reverse of form
- Item 4. Leave Blank
- Item 5. Refer to instructions on reverse of form
- Item 6. Refer to instructions on reverse of form
- Item 7. Refer to instructions on reverse of form
- Item 8. Enter: "new"
- Item 9. Enter: "U.S. Small Business Administration"
- Item 10. Enter: BusinessLINC
- Item 11. Refer to instructions on reverse of form
- Item 12. Refer to instructions on reverse of form
- Item 13. Refer to instructions on reverse of form
- Item 14. Refer to instructions on reverse of form
- Item 15. Refer to instructions on reverse of form
- Item 16. Enter: Check "b." This program is not covered by E.O. 12372.
- Item 17. Refer to instructions on reverse of form
- Item 18. Refer to instructions on reverse of form

#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR STANDARD FORM 424A (BUDGET INFORMATION)

Budget information is found on pages A-1 through A-11

The budget is the applicant's estimate of the total cost of performing the project or activity for which grant support is requested. The budget should include Federal and private sources. All proposed costs reflected in the budget must be necessary to the project, reasonable and otherwise allowable under applicable cost principles and Agency policies. All costs must be justified and itemized by unit cost on the Budget Worksheets (p. A-3).

##### Section A – Budget Summary

Column (A): Enter "BusinessLINC 01-1"

Column (B): Enter the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number

##### Section B – Budget Categories

Amounts entered by budget category in this section are for summary purposes only. Itemization and justification of specific needs by budget category are to be shown under line 21, Section F.

Line 6.a. – 6.h. The budget amounts must reflect the total requirements for funds regardless of the source of funds. All amounts entered in this section are to be expressed in terms of whole dollars only after completing the requirements of Section F.

Line 6.j. Indirect costs are those costs related to the project that are not included as direct costs in a. through h.

##### Section C – Non-Federal Resources

Refer to instructions on reverse of form.

##### Section D – Forecasted Cash Needs

Refer to instructions on reverse of form.

##### Section E – Budget Estimates of Federal Funds Needed for Balance of the Project

Refer to instructions on reverse of form.

Section F – Other Budget Information

Line 21, Direct Charges: Identify and explain all items or categories under Section B in accordance with the instructions set forth below. The itemization must reflect the total requirements for funding from Federal and non-Federal sources. In most instances, Line 21 does not provide sufficient space to reflect all of the necessary information. Budget Worksheets are enclosed. Use these worksheets for the detailed budget information listed below or a reasonable facsimile; BUT each budget line item pertinent to the submission MUST ALSO be completed on the application. Please show a complete breakdown of all cost elements summarized in Section B on a separate sheet. Do not list on Line 21 any items included in the indirect expenses entered on Line 22 below.

- a. Personnel: List the name, title, salary and estimated amount of time for each employee who will be assigned to this project. Note that fees, expenses, and estimated amount of time for outside consultants should be included in f., Contractual. The estimated performance time for outside consultants is not to exceed 50 percent of the total amount of the grant. Resumes of all personnel assigned to this effort must be included in the application.
- b. Fringe Benefits: Leave blank if fringe benefits applicable to direct salaries and wages are treated as part of indirect costs in the indirect cost rate negotiation agreement. If the coalition does not have a federally negotiated fringe benefit package, list each component included as a fringe benefit.
- c. Travel: Reimbursement will be made based on incurred cost. Estimates should be based on knowledge of the geographical area of small business locations. Reimbursement to contractors or volunteers will not be made for time in travel to and from the client's location. Supporting data should include numbers of trips anticipated, costs per trip per person, destinations proposed, modes of transportation, and related subsistence expenses.

Line 22 Indirect Charges:

(Attach Budget Worksheets or reasonable facsimile if sufficient space is not provided.)

Enter the indirect cost rate, date, and agency that issued rate.

If an indirect cost rate is not established, itemize elements and costs of overhead and G&A (General and Administrative) expense categories relative to the performance of this project.

**X. ASSEMBLY AND MAILING INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Please indicate the following information on the front of the return envelope:
  - a. The coalition's name and its return address, or the return address of the lead entity (as applicable), including zip code in the upper left-hand corner of the return envelope.
  - b. Place the following notation in the lower left-hand corner of the sealed envelope.  
THIS IS A SEALED OFFER. DO NOT OPEN. STAMP THE DATE AND TIME RECEIVED ON THE ENVELOPE. THIS PROPOSAL IS IN RESPONSE TO PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT NUMBER, BusinessLINC 01-1 DUE MARCH 20, 2001, AT 4:00 P.M., EASTERN STANDARD TIME, AT THE U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT &

GRANTS MANAGEMENT, 409 3<sup>RD</sup> STREET, SW, 5<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR,  
WASHINGTON, DC 20416, ATTENTION: MINA BOOKHARD.

2. Application. Please submit an original and 2 copies of the pages described below in items a and b. They are part of the Announcement and should be completed and submitted with an original and 2 copies of the proposal:
  - a. The Federal Assistance Application (Standard Form 424), including the cost and technical proposals, and related budgetary data.
  - b. Appendix B, Assurances and Certifications (with appropriate signature).
3. To facilitate review and processing of the proposals, the submission must be arranged, as follows, in two separately bound parts:
  - a. Part I: TECHNICAL PROPOSAL – This part is comprised of the Program Narrative. The proposal should be completed with a table of contents and must be responsive to the evaluation criteria set forth in this announcement. The Technical Proposal must be bound separately from Section II. DO NOT include any cost information in Part I, The Technical Proposal.
  - b. Part II: COST PROPOSAL – This part is to be comprised of the Application, the Budget Information, and the Assurances and Certifications. The material identified as Part II must be bound separately from the Technical Proposal. DO NOT include any technical information in Part II, The Cost Proposal.
4. The application should be submitted in original and 2 copies to:

U.S. Small Business Administration  
Office of Procurement and Grants Management  
409 Third Street, SW, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20416  
ATTN: Mina Bookhard

## **XI. LATE SUBMISSION, REVISIONS AND WITHDRAWALS**

1. Any Application received at the Office of Procurement and Grants Management after the exact time specified for receipt will not be considered unless it is received before award is made, AND:
  - a. It was sent by registered or certified U.S. mail not later than the fifth calendar day before the date specified for receipt of offers (e.g., an offer submitted in response to a solicitation requiring receipt of offers by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month must have been mailed by the 15<sup>th</sup>);
  - b. It was sent by U.S. mail or hand-carried (including delivery by a commercial carrier) if it is determined by the Government that the late receipt was due primarily to Government mishandling after receipt at the Government installation;
  - c. It was sent by U.S. Postal Service Express Mail Next Day Service-Post Office to Addressee, not later than 5:00 p.m. at the place of mailing two working days prior to the date specified for receipt of proposals. The term “working days” excludes weekends and U.S. Federal holidays;
  - d. There is acceptable evidence to establish that it was received at OPGM and was under the Government’s control prior to the time set for receipt of offers, and the Grants Management Officer determines that accepting the late offer would not unduly delay the grant review process; or

- e. It is the only proposal received.

## **XII. UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS**

After a decision has been reached and if the proposal is not successful, SBA will send written notification. SBA will not provide debriefing sessions if the proposal was not successful.

## **XIII. CANCELLATION**

SBA reserves the right to cancel this announcement in whole or in part at the Agency's discretion.

## **XIV. SBA INVOLVEMENT**

SBA will oversee the ongoing operations to monitor effective and efficient use of Federal funds. SBA will review records, files, and procedures relating to the coalition's performance of the project. All contracts, other than those submitted as part of the proposal, will require the written approval of SBA. The selection of regular staff other than clerical support requires prior SBA approval. SBA will interview clients to evaluate program effectiveness. SBA will review quarterly data project reports for completeness and adequacy. SBA may conduct an annual programmatic and financial examination.

## **XV. OPTION YEAR FUNDING**

Applicants shall prepare application cover sheets (SF Form 424) and budgets for each of the 5 budget periods consisting of 12 months each. Applicants are advised that the performance period for specific awards made under this announcement may consist of one base year with up to 4 twelve-month option years. The project periods may consist of up to 5 twelve-month budget periods. Each additional twelve-month budget period beyond the original base year may be exercised at the discretion of the Government. Among the factors involved in deciding whether to exercise an option are the availability of funds, continuing program authorization, satisfactory performance of the applicant, and the determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Government.

## **XVI. GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

- ADMINISTRATION: means the U.S. Small Business Administration;
- ADMINISTRATOR: means the Administrator of the Small Business Administration;
- AWARDEE: means a recipient of a grant under 15 U.S.C. § 637(n).
- INDIAN TRIBE: means any Indian tribe, band, pueblo, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation, as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which is recognized by a State or the Federal Government.

- **IN-KIND:** means a non-cash contribution that is budget line items only, including office equipment and office space. In-kind contributions are valued under the guidelines in OMB Circular A-110.
- **PRO-NET:** means Procurement Access and Marketing Network. Pro-Net is an Internet-based database of information on more than 195,000 small, disadvantaged, 8(a), HUBZone, and women-owned businesses. It is free to federal and state government agencies as well as prime and other contractors seeking small business contractors, subcontractors or partnership opportunities. Pro-NET is a cooperative effort among SBA's offices of Government Contracting, Minority Enterprise Development, Advocacy, Women's Business Ownership, Field Operations, Marketing & Customer Service, the Chief Information Officer, and the National Women's Business Council.
- **SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN:** means a business entity organized for profit, with a place of business located in the United States, and which operates primarily within the United States or which makes a significant contribution to the U.S. economy through payment of taxes or use of American products, materials or labor. A business concern may be in the legal form of an individual proprietorship, partnership, limited liability company, corporation, joint venture, association, trust or cooperative, except that where the form is a joint venture there can be no more than 49 percent participation by foreign business entities in the joint venture.

## **XVII. PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT (44 U.S.C. Ch. 35)**

The information being requested in this Program Announcement is needed to evaluate applicants and ensure that awards are made in furtherance of the BusinessLINC program's objectives. The information will be used to grant awards to provide assistance to small businesses. Applicants' responses to the data collection requirements are necessary for them to receive a benefit under the BusinessLINC Program. The information provided by applicants will be kept confidential to the extent required by law. Applicants are not required to respond to the Program Announcement unless it displays a currently valid OMB number. SBA estimates it will take applicants 60 hours to respond.

## **XVIII. PRIVACY ACT (5 U.S.C. §552A)**

Any person can request to see or get copies of any personal information that SBA has in the requestor's file, when that file is retrieved by individual identifiers, such as name or social security number. Requests for information about another party may be denied unless SBA has the written permission of the individual to release the information to the requestor or unless the information is subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA").

Note: Any person concerned with the collection, use and disclosure of information, under the Privacy Act may contact the Chief, Freedom of Information/Privacy Act Office, U.S. Small Business Administration, Suite 5900, 409 Third Street, SW, Washington, DC 20416, for information about the Agency's procedures relating to the Privacy Act and FOIA.